

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



Enclosure 2b
September 1, 2011

Meeting

RIDE

Thursday, July 21, 2011 - 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Attending: George Caruolo (chairman), Carolina Bernal, Colleen Callahan, Karin Forbes, Patrick Guida, Mat Santos, B. Shimberg

Absent: Lorne Adrain, Robert Carothers

The meeting convened at 11:30 a.m.

Chairman Caruolo welcomed everyone and acknowledged that Regents Adrain and Carothers would not be joining the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion duly made by Regent Forbes and seconded by Regent Callahan it was

VOTED:	That	the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education accept the day's agenda.
	Vote:	7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:
	YEAS:	G. Caruolo, C. Bernal, C. Callahan, K. Forbes, P. Guida, M. Santos, B. Shimberg
	NAYS:	0

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Gist alerted the BOR about the issues that RIDE had been experiencing with its e-mail system over the past several days due to a nonfunctional server that was in the process of being replaced.

RTTT Update

- The Rhode Island Race to the Top Performance Monitoring Plan has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education and is now posted on the RIDE Web site.
- The plan describes how RIDE will monitor LEAs' programmatic and fiscal implementation of Race to the Top.
- The Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLO) process will enable groups of LEAs to manage performance toward results by engaging in data-driven, problem-solving conversations with their peers and with RIDE; the Commissioner discussed how RIDE will use the CLO process as a way to monitor sub-recipient performance.
- The LEA groupings and calendar for the CLO process are also posted on the RIDE Web site.

Legislative Update

- RIDE shared with the Board an overview of those education bills that passed the General Assembly this year.
- 2,400 pieces of legislation were introduced.
- More than 200 bills impacting education were introduced.
- The compulsory-attendance act and the safe-schools act, as it relates to cyber-bullying bill were two of the major pieces of legislation approved this year.

Public Remarks

The first person on the list was Dr. Susan Lusi, Providence's new interim superintendent, whom Commissioner Gist introduced.

Dr. Lusi took the opportunity to introduce herself to the Board and shared that she is looking forward to working with the Board, Commissioner Gist, and the staff at RIDE and how she is absolutely thrilled to be back working in Providence after being away for eight years.

Neil Steinberg – President and CEO of the RI Foundation, spoke in support of the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Betty Bernal – Civic contributor for the Latino community in RI, spoke in support of the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Joanne Spazianno, Cranston resident and taxpayer, spoke about her concern with the word in Cranston that the Achievement First Corporation has a purchase and sales agreement with the Temple on Park Avenue at the tune of \$1.3 million.

Frank Flynn [Executive Director of the RI Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals] spoke about his concern over RIDE's role in the process and the lack of objectivity in regard to the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

After Mr. Flynn's comments, Chairman Caruolo took the opportunity to clarify that the provision of materials is across the Board and when outside entities request information, it is provided to them. He said that it is a well-known fact that the Department is a strong advocate for this application; it is their job, and the Board is here to make a decision. RIDE is not given the authority to make the decision, this Board is.

One would expect them [RIDE] to advocate for what they have determined is the best course of action, in their opinion. By the same token, we would expect that if you were taking a different position you would do the same. That is why we listen to public comment on this application, time, after time after time.

He went on to say that he, himself, did find the part of about identification of the employment a little disturbing. If someone wishes to not put forward where they are employed, that should be an issue. If someone wishes to do it, that is fine as well. But he said he feels the need to defend the Department because it is [its] job to determine a position, [its] position on these issues.

Chris Lannen, Democrats for Education Reform and Providence resident, spoke in support of the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Kathleen Torregrossa, Cranston resident and taxpayer, spoke in opposition to the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Kenneth Rullo, Cranston resident and taxpayer, spoke in opposition to the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Paul Valetta, Jr., President of the Cranston Firefighters' Union, spoke in opposition to the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Dennis Littky, Co-Founder/Co-Director of the MET School, spoke about the Career and Tech regulations that are in the process of being revised.

Dick Tomlin, Cranston resident, spoke in opposition to the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Mike Traficante, Chairman of the Board of the Laborers Charter School and member of the School Committee, spoke in opposition to the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

[Cumberland] Mayor Daniel McKee spoke in support of the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Reshma Singh, Director of Achievement First, spoke in support of the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal.

Chairman's Remarks:

Next, Chairman Caruolo asked that the BOR look into newly passed legislation that will raise the age when a student can drop out of school, from age 16 to age 18. He asked that the BOR look into the programs that were recently put into place in New Hampshire to support the same legislative change.

Discussion Items:

Teacher Certification:

Commissioner Gist gave an overview of what RIDE has done to prepare for the redesign of teacher certification in the R.I.

Mary Ann Snider, Chief of the Division, and Lisa Foehr, new Director of the Office of Educator Quality and Certification, walked the BOR through the comprehensive overview of the components that RIDE will put into regulation upon Regents' approval, and responded to questions regarding how the new system will:

- Create a multi-tiered system that will establish pathways for career advancement for teachers;
- Streamline the certification process, ensuring that all certificates are designed to support student achievement;
- Expand pathways into education;
- Revise the approval process for our preparation programs;
- Establish that the certification process and program approval are interrelated;
- Establish a renewal process that predominantly relies on education-evaluation data;
- Introduce content-specific assessments tied to each certification area;
- Allow maximum flexibility for individual teachers and administrators and for school systems;
- Maintain a strong focus on professional development and growth by requiring annual professional development that is shaped and agreed upon by the educator and the primary evaluator; and
- Ensure that every recommendation supports and meets the needs of students, first and foremost.

The Board of Regents had questions regarding:

- What other states have been doing around certification renewal and whether there have been any glitches;
- Data on implementation for those states that have enacted special legislation/regulation;
- Concerns with tying evaluation results to certification;
- How the new plan is going to be communicated to teachers;
- Districts' ability to carry out the evaluation system;
- How to ensure that these regulations go out for public hearing;

- Whether there is any preparation for special permits, e.g., substitute teachers, student teachers, coaches, drivers' education, beside the required bachelor's degree; and
- Whether there is a process in place to inform someone of how he/she can reapply for his or her certification after being evaluated as ineffective.

Upon listening to the Board's concerns with the draft regulations, Chairman Caruolo stated that the Board has the power to adjust them if they do not work.

Career and Tech Education:

Commissioner Gist gave an overview of the ten policy briefs presented to the Board. Andrea Castañeda answered questions from the Board regarding:

- Who bears the burden of the tuition supplement for high-cost programs?
- How are high-growth/high-wage sectors defined?
- How will the new regulations affect the current career-and-tech systems?
- Who has been involved in the development of the proposal?
- Has the Statewide Advisory Board been involved in the development of the new regulations?

Capital Budget:

Commissioner Gist gave an overview of the Capital Budget, a five-year plan that covers repairs, renovations, and improvements at the state-operated schools.

Carolyn Dias, Chief of the Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, and Bill Trimble, Senior Finance Officer, went over the documents presented to the BOR and answered questions regarding:

- Whether the Capital Budget is about health-and-safety projects;
- Whether or not the Capital Budget funds are included in the current RIDE budget;
- Whether the Capital Budget will go to the General Assembly for consideration of funding;
- Whether the Capital Budget being discussed is a request obligating funds or only a recommendation; and
- What the difference is between what was projected versus what is in now, and how it is best identified.

Achievement First:

Next, Commissioner Gist took the opportunity to clarify some of the comments made during public comment around the request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

She also commented on how:

- She personally recruited Achievement First to come to R.I., and how she did not know until the application came in that the structure would be Providence and Cranston.

- Because of the real strong work of RIDE staff, with support from the BOR for getting the new Funding Formula in place, Cranston will gain more than \$9 million over the next 5 years, even if the two new schools that are being proposed are approved.
- R.I. has great teachers, great programs, and great innovation going on, but what it doesn't have is systematic greatness across the state. Families of every income level want great schools for their children, challenging opportunities, and opportunities for them to achieve at high levels.
- R.I. is not doing well in educating its children of color and its Hispanic students, and those students are not receiving the best and the high-quality education that they need to be successful.

The next item for discussion was the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal, but, since time was running out, Chairman Caruolo asked the Board members whether they would like to stay on and listen to a presentation from RIDE staff on the Achievement First Mayoral Academy proposal or table the discussion. Since Regent Santos had to leave and Regent Carothers was absent, it was suggested that a special Work Session be scheduled to give the Board an opportunity for in-depth discussion.

Approval Items:

Commissioner's Dissertation Topic:

On a motion duly made by Regent Guida and seconded by Regent Shimberg it was

VOTED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve authorization for the Chairman of the Board of Regents to approve Commissioner Gist's dissertation topic.

Vote: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: G. Caruolo, C. Bernal, C. Callahan, K. Forbes, P. Guida, M. Santos, B. Shimberg

NAYS: 0

School Construction:

Chairman Caruolo shared with the BOR correspondence from the General Assembly on school construction, and asked for a motion to put off the approval of school-construction projects.

On a motion made by Regent Forbes and seconded by Regent Shimberg, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education put off the approval of school-construction projects.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: G. Caruolo, C. Bernal, C. Callahan, K. Forbes, P. Guida, B. Shimberg

NAYS: 0

Regent Santos had left the meeting at this point on the agenda.

Approval of two (2) ETS tests regenerated by ETS and approval of one (1) test to replace one being eliminated by ETS, for initial certification of teachers.

On a motion made by Regent Guida and seconded by Regent Forbes, it was

VOTED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approve the tests, as presented.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follow:

YEAS: G. Caruolo, C. Bernal, C. Callahan, K. Forbes, P. Guida, B. Shimberg

NAYS: 0

Regent Santos had left the meeting at this point on the agenda.

Regent Shimberg asked whether or not the Board would go into executive session for the purpose of discussing Commissioner Gist's evaluation, and she noted how she was concerned that the BOR was not complying with the Commissioner's contract that she be evaluated by June 30th of every year. She also shared that she would be willing to once again chair the Commissioner's Evaluation Committee.

On a motion duly made by Regent Bernal and seconded by Regent Guida it was

VOTED: That the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting.

Vote: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: G. Caruolo, C. Bernal, C. Callahan, K. Forbes, P. Guida,
B. Shimberg

NAYS: 0

Regent Santos had left the meeting at this point on the
agenda.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.